IN THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently amended) A method of searching a database to find documents similar to a query document, comprising:

decomposing the query document into different data types, including a layout data type indicating the arrangement of the different data types within the query document;

for one or more of the elements in a first data type, conducting a first data type similarity search to return match results from the database for the one or more elements in the first data type;

for one or more of the elements in a second data type, conducting a second data type similarity search to return match results from the database for the one or more elements in the first data type; and

combining the match results from the first data type similarity search and the second data type similarity search with the layout data type to provide query document match results.

2.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein one of the data types is representative of text.

3.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein a plurality of the data types are representative of text, separate data types of the plurality being representative of different functional blocks of text.

4.   (Previously amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein one of the data types is representative of pictorial images.

5.   (Previously amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein one of the data types is representative of graphical images.

6.   (Cancelled)

7.   (Previously amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of similarity searching to return match results is carried out, separately, for a plurality of elements having between them more than two data types.

8.   (Previously amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, where all features of a common data type in the document are treated as one element.

9.   (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein spatially distinct features of a common data type in the document are treated as separate elements.

10.   (Previously amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein elements are user selectable or deselectable for the step of similarity searching.

11.   (Previously amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the similarity searching results for separate elements are weighted before combination.

12.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said weighting is user selected.

13.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said weighting is attributed according to a determined significance of each relevant element in the document.

14.   (Previously amended) A method of searching a database to find documents similar to a query document, comprising:

decomposing the query document into elements of different data types;

determining a layout element in a layout datatype from the spatial arrangement of the elements in the document; and

for the layout element, conducting a layout similarity search to return match results from the database for the layout element.

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15.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the layout similarity search involves searching against templates representative of different document types.

16.   (Original) A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the elements include elements of separate data types representative of different functional blocks of text.

17.   (Previously amended) A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the elements include elements of data types representative of images.